

Members

Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson
Sen. Thomas Wyss
Sen. Allen Paul
Sen. Rose Ann Antich
Sen. Mark Blade
Sen. Anita Bowser
Rep. B. Patrick Bauer
Rep. Craig Fry
Rep. Clyde Kersey
Rep. Woody Burton
Rep. Thomas Saunders
Rep. Matthew Whetstone



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON THE HISTORY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Authority: Legislative Council Resolution 01-2
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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 28, 2001
Meeting Time: 1:30 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 401-B
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson; Sen. Thomas Wyss; Sen. Rose Ann Antich; Sen. Mark Blade; Sen. Anita Bowser; Rep. Clyde Kersey; Rep. Matthew Whetstone.

Members Absent: Sen. Allen Paul; Rep. B. Patrick Bauer; Rep. Craig Fry; Rep. Woody Burton; Rep. Thomas Saunders.

Senator Merritt called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m., and introduced the members of the Committee. Sen. Merritt discussed the purpose of the Committee and reviewed the charge to the Committee by the Legislative Council. Sen. Merritt outlined the history of the Committee, and briefly discussed the earlier work on the history of the Indiana General Assembly.

Sen. Merritt introduced Pam Bennett of the Indiana Historical Bureau. Ms. Bennett discussed the original legislative committee and the successor committees which worked on the publication of the earlier histories and historical biographies. Ms. Bennett discussed

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

the problems the original committees faced in finding the right author for the job, and commented on the importance of clear deadlines and requirements. Ms. Bennett profiled the author who created the volumes, Justin Walsh. Ms. Bennett then described the original creation process, and the early difficulties of working without computers. She also described the storage media for the original volumes.

Sen. Merritt asked whether the original reference material was still available. Ms. Bennett replied that the most of the material was located in files in the state library, but that some of the later computer tapes were housed at Indiana University-Bloomington.

Ms. Bennett then discussed the funding of the original committee, and the public-private cooperation between the Lilly Foundation and the General Assembly that provided funding in the later years of the project.

The Committee discussed the media storage of the history and historical biographies, and posed questions on the possibility of a web based database and the use of CD-ROM.

Ms. Bennett outlined the format of the earlier history volumes, and described how key reference materials in the form of maps, charts and other data were included. The Committee discussed the importance of reference material being included with the published work.

Ms. Bennett stated that decisions facing the Committee include providing for the computer data entry of the information in volume one of the historical biographies, and in defining a process to find the right historian to oversee the complete project of the history and the historical biographies.

Sen. Bowser remarked that she had written a review of the original work when it was published. She commented that in the review she had pointed out the lack of human interest stories in the original volume. Sen. Bowser stated that the upcoming version should explore the human interest side of the General Assembly. Ms. Bennett noted that she remembered the review, and had discussed the review with the author. Ms. Bennett said she and Justin Walsh agreed with the review, but that the scope of the material precluded anything beyond what was done in the published volumes.

Sen. Wyss asked about Justin Walsh, and whether he would be available to discuss the previous project with the Committee. Ms. Bennett responded that he recently retired. The Committee discussed Justin Walsh.

Sen. Blade asked Ms. Bennett about the process to find the right person. Ms. Bennett discussed meeting deadlines and finding the right person.

Sen. Merritt discussed the authority of the Committee to set up the process to create the select committee. The Committee discussed the interim versus the select committee and reviewed P.L. 151-1976.

Sen. Bowser initiated a discussion among the Committee members on the use of university help for research. The Commission discussed research, and reviewed the membership of the advisory council to the select committee created by P.L. 151-1976. Ms. Bennett discussed how the staff hired to help with the original volumes was added to the staff of the Legislative Services Agency (LSA), and worked through and with LSA.

Sen. Wyss began a discussion on the purpose of the interim Committee, and asked what actions the Committee could really take. The Committee discussed possible

recommendations from the Committee such as web based data files, types of books, and other print and electronic media.

Sen. Wyss asked Ms. Bennett about the possibilities of partnering with private associations such as genealogy groups.

The Committee discussed the updating of the historical biographies. Ms. Bennett commented on the benefits of a computer database and its ability to house information such as human interest stories. The Committee discussed the number and type of volumes of the history and historical biographies.

Sen. Merritt discussed the possibility of having LSA maintain a continuous biographical database. The Committee discussed maintaining a process to continually update the information in the historical biographies.

The Committee discussed obtaining the oral history of the General Assembly. The Committee also discussed the inclusion of historical information obtained from private individuals involved with the General Assembly.

Sen. Merritt outlined the meeting schedule for the Committee, and determined the next meeting would be September 13, at 1:30 p.m. The agenda for the next meeting would include:

- 1) a presentation by the Legislative Services Agency on LSA's current database and on LSA's in-house printing operation; and
- 2) information on other publishing methods from the Indiana Historical Bureau.

Rep. Whetstone suggested the Committee consider contacting universities for the names of potential advisory committee members.

Sen. Antich suggested that any database of legislator information should include each legislator's primary mode of transportation in traveling to and from the General Assembly.

Sen. Merritt asked for further discussion, and hearing none, adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.